

A LITTLE EXTRA JINGLE IN YOUR POCKET:

There is a current myth among job searchers: Job searching between November-January is a waste of time. The fact is, whether you want a full-time permanent position or a seasonal part-time job, looking between November and January does have its advantages. Susan Heathfield, a Human Resource Guide with About.com says this about end-of-year job searching: "You have the opportunity to help people spend their budgets before year end. Hiring managers, with fresh goals for the new year, are eager to find people who can help them get the jump on goal accomplishment. If nothing else, many organizations interview in December for positions starting at the first of the year." In other words, if you are looking for a job, now is a good time to look.

Holiday Hiring Projection:

Toys R Us will hire 35,000

AT&T has 1,000 openings

UPS- 200+

HH Greggs- 800+

Hickory Farms will hire 4,000

If you are considering part-time, in her article, Top Three Benefits of Holiday Jobs (www.families.com), Sherry Holetzky states that while a holiday job might not provide many standard employee benefits, these seasonal jobs could lead to more.

- Holiday jobs can create great opportunities for people who have been laid off or otherwise lost a job, for stay home parents re-entering the workforce, or for young people just starting out, to eventually land a great job. Even if they don't result in something permanent, it's a great way to fill in those empty spaces on your resume.
- Since most holiday jobs are part-time, they might offer the perfect schedule for those already working a full-time job, are in school, or have children.
- Many companies that hire extra help during the holidays, offer discounts on their products and services even for temporary employees. Besides making extra money, you'll save on purchases.
- Start filling out applications as soon as the company will accept them. Some start hiring as early as October. Many employers want the employees to start in November and work through the first of January.

Tips to get you started *(Some material by Ashley M. Heher with The Sun Sentinel)*

- First, recognize that some employers want experience and others just want a jolly attitude. Customer service positions usually require prior experience including actual retail sales, trouble-shooting, people skills, and staying calm in frazzled situations. Even if some of this experience is from a job ten years ago, it's still worth talking about. "Customer service experience is, by far, the most important criterion that everyone is looking for," says Patrick Tomlinson, senior vice president with Aon Corporation. Other organizations aren't just looking for retail veterans. Sometimes a good personality and a strong work ethic can get you the job. Spokeswoman, Jennifer Albano at Toys R Us Inc. says, "We're looking for hardworking, reliable employees who want to help shoppers find the perfect gift for the special child in their lives." The country's largest toy store considers retail experience a plus but not a requirement.



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Tips to get you started (continued)

- Look in newspapers, online and go door-to-door. Some employers don't bother to advertise, so go to the place of business and ask if they're hiring. Aon's researchers found merchants were most likely to hire people referred by other employees and walk-ins.
- As much as possible, be flexible with your schedule. Employers know that parents have some limitations due to child care and a second job, just be flexible in the areas you can be. In other words, it's best not to say you can't work on Tuesday night because your favorite TV show comes on.

Where to look *(Some material by Tory Johnson with www.abcnews.com)*

- The most obvious places are retail stores, especially those with toys. They will hire greeters, demonstrators, wrappers, stockers, cashiers and even characters and entertainers to help boost holiday moods. Discounters and other low-price stores are expected to do relatively well as shoppers try to save this year.
- Look at both big box and family-owned. Big box stores have big established work forces, which means that they might need less part-time holiday help. Locally-owned stores have smaller full-time staffs. Retail phone companies such as AT&T and Verizon know that many people will buy phones this year, so they are hiring extra personnel. The same goes for electronic retail stores.
- Other retailers such as gas station and convenience stores, restaurants, movie rental and theatres are also good places to look.
- According to a report by ABC News, UPS will hire 50,000 seasonal package handlers and drivers' helpers. Local independent delivery services are also hiring walkers, bikers and drivers. Look them up in the phone book or just go by.
- Security Firms are another option since they beef up patrol to safeguard the big crowds in stores.

Top 5 Jobs for Kids, Teens and College Students

1. **Baby-sitting**- Parents scramble to find babysitters. Let your family and neighbors know you can help with their two-legged and four-legged kids.
2. **Cleaning**- Whether families are preparing for company or cleaning up after them, many just want somebody else to do it.
3. **Shopping**- Many elderly and disabled adults have a list of items they need and require help getting them. You can offer a personal shopping service, either at the mall or online. You can combine this with cleaning and add cooking for a full-line service.
4. **Gadget training**- Most kids are experts at computers, phones and other electronics. Enterprising kids can market their talent to people who are willing to pay.
5. **Wrapping and delivering**- This might start as a seasonal job, but can carry on through the year: Wrapping and delivering gifts for businesses, friends and family at the holidays, birthday and anniversary gifts at other times.

Disclaimer: With any of these services: first recognize whether you are qualified to perform the service. If so, create a rate plan, write a simple contract to be signed by both parties, be dependable, and spend your pay wisely!

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So, what if companies have already hired someone else?

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Many businesses stop the hiring process in November, so if you've missed this timeline, there are other creative places to look. Some are opportunities in which the whole family can participate:

- **Personal Services:** Set up your own personal service business. Think of the things people need during the holidays: shopping, wrapping, shipping, writing cards. Many businesses, such as attorneys and accountants send hundreds of cards each year. They often look to outsource this. Let them buy the supplies and offer to do the labor for them. If you have the knack for wrapping presents, offer to wrap their employees' and customers' gifts. It might only take two large accounts or several small ones to keep you busy. Businesses will probably ask for a reference list, so a good place to start is with family and friends. In the beginning, you can place an ad in a thrifty paper or distribute among your friends and neighbors. Once a customer base is established, word-of-mouth should be all the advertising you need. There is a caution here: since these are services you are providing, you are also liable for the quality of service and any damage. It's a good idea to look into this further before committing your services.
- An increasing number of families are reducing holiday busyness by hiring caterers for their holiday dinners and parties. Local catering and party-planning companies might need help with cooking, delivering or set up.
- Customer service and help desk centers have an increased call volume due to solving issues and troubleshooting purchases.
- If customer service is not your forte', you can still get a job in retail. 'Tis the season for inventory, which means retailers hire extra help to perform this task. With all the extra merchandise coming in, receivables employees are also needed to check in inventory. Again, contact all types of stores to see if they're hiring for any of these positions.
- Many tax preparation agencies are training for 2010 tax season.
- Beginning in January, weight-loss facilities and gyms will see an increase in memberships and need personnel to take calls, do secretarial work and work one-to-one with clients.



Turn part-time into full-time

Brent Rasmussen with Careerbuilders.com says that 31% of employers are willing to hire their part-time employees as full-time. He provides a few tips:

- When you speak to the hiring manager, tell them you are interested in full-time work.
- Show enthusiasm. Go above and beyond the minimum.
- Be teachable-be willing to learn something new every day.
- Treat the part-time or seasonal job as if it were your only job.
- Whether short-term or part-time, it's an audition. Think of it as an extended job interview.
- Be a team-player. Listen to and get to know your colleagues, one of them just might recommend you for full-time or another position.

Links to Jobs in Alabama

www.toysrus.com

www.upsjobs.com

www.snagajob.com

www.hickoryfarms.com

www.blockbuster.com

www.alabamajobs.com

www.joblink.alabama.gov

Family Holiday Traditions

Write a letter to each person to be opened during the season. Store the letters in an old box and add to it each year.

Play a holiday trivia game. This is always fun in my family. You can download facts and trivia from the internet or go to your local library for a book that relates to your holiday. Come up with 10 multiple choice questions to call out, provide a sheet of paper for each member to record their answers and give a "trophy" to the winner. Each year, your family competes for the trophy.

Create a baking day, where you come together as a family and bake your favorite treats to eat or give away. End the evening with a holiday movie.

Read a book together. My family has been reading the same two books since I was a child. It is expected and anticipated.

Volunteer as a family. Nothing unites a family together like giving to others. It provides a message to your children that giving is much more than laying down cash. Giving your time, effort and kindness is more rewarding than receiving.

Create a holiday story book. You don't have to be a scrapbook expert to do this. Ask each member to write or type a favorite story or memory. This can be an opportunity to write things you are thankful for, highlights from the past year and funny quotes said throughout the year. Compile the pages into a notebook to be viewed every year.

Frugal Ways to Entertain Your Guests

You don't have to go to a lot of expense or effort to entertain your guests. Here are ideas for kids from 1-92.

- We've mentioned this before; ask everyone to bring a dish.
- Ask them to also bring their favorite board game. Instead of sitting around a TV or table for four hours, keep the day moving with a game of checkers, Monopoly® or cards. Be sure there are games for the little ones, too. Puzzles and cards like Go Fish are great inexpensive options.
- Move the crowd outside if weather permits. Organize a touch football game or other outdoor activity.
- For the performers in your bunch, ask them to put on a quick holiday play. Some families have made this a tradition, adding roles as the family increases.
- Get everyone involved in setting the table and decorating. Wait until everyone arrives and assign duties.
- Set up a card-writing area. Local nursing homes, shelters and our troops overseas love to get cards for any occasion. Have guests write a note or have pre-made cards ready for them to sign.
- Play party games. From the classic charades to exchanging prank gifts.
- Don't leave out the toddlers. Set up an area where they can safely play with toys they bring.

The Absent Parent and the Holidays

Whether parents are apart by divorce, death, work or military, the separation can be difficult for children at any time. The holidays may present new challenges as they can be a painful reminder that things aren't as they used to be. It can be just as difficult for parents as well. Therapist, Beverly Waldman Rich, outpatient services at Bradley Hospital, says there are ways parents can ease this tension and create happy holiday memories for their children and themselves.

- Plan ahead in November so the children can anticipate and prepare for what is going to happen. Ask for input from older children and do your best to accommodate within reason. If you are divorced, as hard as it is, don't put a guilt trip on your children about their desire to spend a day with the other parent. Also, keep in mind that children, especially young ones, want to buy gifts for the divorced parent but might not know how to do it and feel awkward asking for help.



“Traditions are the glue that stabilize kids and help them feel secure,” says Waldman Rich. Keep old traditions and make a few new ones.

- If possible, have the absent parent write a letter or make an audio or video tape

of themselves reading a special holiday book or preparing the traditional holiday dessert. Kids can create a video of themselves to give to the parent. Even a simple message can be very helpful in filling some of the void each party feels. If the parent is not available, take the time to make a special collage of pictures and special memoirs of time together. Use this time to share stories.

- Many parents believe that if they over indulge their children with gifts, that it will compensate for the guilt they feel. Choose one special gift to share with your children or choose one tradition, either old or new, to share together. On the flip side, some absent parents do not participate in gifting their children. It's good to validate your children's disappointment, but do so without putting down the other parent.
- If your children feel sadness, let them express their emotional pain in a safe environment, validating their feelings. Even if a parent does not feel exactly like their children, the parent can probably relate to the loss of some aspect of past family life.
- While trying to make the holidays special for your children, don't neglect yourself. Seeking companionship from relatives, co-workers and friends are good ways to reduce stress. Relieving your own stress will have a positive impact on your child.

The Alabama Department of Children's Affairs *Working Together To Improve the Lives of Alabama's Children*

The Alabama Parent Network

The Parent Network serves as a state partner on parent leadership initiatives and parent education. The goal is to support the varied needs of parents while enhancing their ability to support their children and to connect parents with available resources.

PARENTALK

A Publication for Alabama's Parents

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